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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Attorney General Terry Goddard, Pima County Sheriff Clarence Dupnik and Pima County Attorney Barbara LaWall Discuss Methamphetamine Public Health Crisis

(Tucson, Ariz. – February 15, 2005) Attorney General Terry Goddard was joined by Pima County Sheriff Clarence Dupnik and Pima County Attorney Barbara LaWall at a news conference here today to discuss Goddard's new initiative to combat the production and use of methamphetamines.

"We are in the middle of a public health crisis with meth," Goddard said. "Meth cookers are poisoning our children, putting our public safety officers in unacceptable dangers and imposing high costs on taxpayers, businesses, healthcare systems and the environment."

Goddard is working with legislators and a broad coalition of law enforcement officials to adopt a new law to make methamphetamine production more difficult by moving chemicals used by criminals to cook meth behind the pharmacy counter. The goal of the legislation, sponsored by Rep. Tom O'Halleran, is to reduce meth cooking in Arizona, begin a coordinated education effort on the dangers of meth, and update existing laws governing environmental remediation and child abuse.

"Meth is the number one illegal drug contributing to violent crime in Arizona," Dupnik said. "Local law enforcement needs more tools to prevent the use and production of this dangerous drug."

As part of his efforts, Goddard will host a Meth Summit for Western States Attorneys General on February 24. The purpose of the Summit will be to focus on the best approaches to curtail the manufacture, distribution and use of meth. Treatment and prosecution will also be discussed at the meeting.

"Meth is not selective," LaWall said. "We find it in every neighborhood throughout Tucson. It is time we looked for new solutions to this problem in order to protect our children and our neighborhoods."

The proposed legislation is based on the experience in Oklahoma where the state legislature adopted a similar law in 2004. Since that law was adopted, Oklahoma has been successful in reducing meth lab seizures by some 80 percent in the last year.

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